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# A FIGHTING CHURCH

GILDHAM







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BY

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To  
ALAN, LESTER, AND ROGER

KILLED IN ACTION; WHOSE BODIES  
REST "IN FLANDERS' FIELDS" BUT  
WHOSE SOULS "GO MARCHING ON".



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## INTRODUCTION

WHAT is the matter with the Church"? is a question which has been often asked and never more frequently or more searchingly than of late. Many and varied are the answers and likewise the remedies proposed. There is, however, one deep-seated, fundamental evil which has always beset the Church and hampered her usefulness. It may be no more, perhaps even less, prevalent to-day than in some previous ages, but the splendid self-sacrifice evoked by the war reveals it more clearly and at the same time provides both the example and the incentive for its cure.

This root evil, from which springs all the Church's weakness, timidity, and inefficiency, is nothing more or less than our individual and corporate selfishness. The Church of to-day has become too self-conscious, too self-centered. In a world it is commissioned to save at the risk and cost of its very life, it is devoting itself too largely to its own preservation, safeguarding, and upbuilding. It has lost in some measure the venturesomeness of faith and the spirit of sacrifice.

All of us, clergy and laity, parishes and individuals, have fallen short in this regard and we need nothing less than a thorough conversion, a complete reorientation, a new viewpoint, if the Church is once again to exercise the influence and render the service it did in its best days. Instead of being concerned about itself, the Church must become utterly other-regarding. This is fundamental. If we can effect this change in spirit and viewpoint, everything else will follow.

This is the conviction with which the following pages are written and this is the one theme which runs throughout. After setting forth the essential spirit and true objective of the Church, an attempt is made to show how this new, yet old, spirit and viewpoint give life and zest and purpose and reality to the Church's customary corporate activities—Prayer, Sacrament, and Worship. In this effort the writer has levied much upon the spirit, and in some cases the words, of those who have written and spoken from the vantage ground of personal contact with the war.

So brief and simple a treatise can, of course, only touch the surface, but it is hoped that the message will not be without value to the average man who honestly desires to have a religion that is real. If in any instance it succeeds in making its readers more unselfish Christians and therefore more active

and faithful soldiers of Christ, it will have justified its setting forth. If in any thing it is contrary to the teaching of the Captain of our Salvation, may it be overruled by His Holy Spirit so that it may redound to His Glory and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

G. ASHTON OLDHAM.



# I

## CHRISTIANITY AN ADVENTURE

*"Christianity has lost its power of coherence, its joy, its power of laughter."*—CLUTTON BROCK.

A MOTHER wrote to her son who was thinking of volunteering for the war: "I am afraid it is not solely or chiefly a sense of duty that moves you but rather the spirit of adventure." The frank words hurt. The man, however, being beyond draft age and having indubitable responsibilities at home, took them seriously to heart and decided that in his case they were true. He remained at home.

The Spirit of Adventure! How large a part it has played in the world's history! Mankind has always felt its lure. Whatever sordid motives may have been the ultimate cause of most wars, and however so-called statesmen and politicians may have played upon higher impulses for their own selfish ends, the fact

remains that the great majority of fighters in every age have been moved by loftier ideals, such as may all be more or less summed up under the Spirit of Adventure. A Caesar or Charlemagne or Napoleon is able to retain the devotion and loyalty of his hosts, despite all hardships and disappointments, because all alike are embarked on a great adventure. The fanatical enthusiasm of the Crusades was due in large part to this spirit of adventure. So it has always been; and not only in war, but also in time of peace. The voyages and explorations of Vasco da Gama, Columbus, Pizarro, Raleigh, Frobisher, Drake, and all their tribe were due not merely to sordid motives of trade or to the exalted desire to widen the horizon of human knowledge, but also to this same spirit of adventure, which appears to spring eternal in the human breast. Beginning with the child in its first feeble efforts to grasp the moon in its tiny fingers, it lingers with youth in his dreams and hopes and visions and beckons the mature man into ever greater fields of achievement. It may consort with other motives or work alone, but in any case it gives joy and zest and enthusiasm to life. Other motives may cause man to crawl or walk. Adventure makes him leap and run.

How large a part the Spirit of Adventure

played in the recent war it would be difficult to estimate. But that for large numbers, along with other and perhaps higher motives, it proved a very powerful influence, may safely be assumed. Not only the men in our army, but the whole nation of a hundred million people behind them, were aroused to a plane of elation and intensity such as made any achievement possible. This was due in very large measure to the fact that, in however vague sort of way, every individual felt the spirit of adventure. The imagination of the dullest was in some measure captured by the transcendent greatness of the prize at stake, by the tremendous odds to fight, the difficulties to be overcome, the wounds, suffering, and in many cases death to be endured—all of which, instead of acting as a deterrent, actually intensified the desire to go and embark on the Great Adventure.

In view of all this enthusiastic loyalty and devotion elicited by the state, one cannot help wondering why the Church of the Living God with its surpassing aims fails to call forth a similar devotion. In the beginning, and on some rare occasions since, it has done so. Is it doing so to-day? If not, why not? Is it possible to convert the widespread enthusiasm for war into enthusiasm for peace? Can we make men as

enthusiastic to beat the devil in America as they were to beat the Germans in Europe? Can we call forth for the Cross even a tithe of such devotion as has been given to the flag? Can we get men to fight for the Kingdom of God as ardently as they have fought for the United States of America? This is the Church's problem and there is no time to lose in its solution. I believe it can be solved, if in some way or other we can recover in and for the Church the Spirit of Adventure.

This should not be an impossible or even a very difficult task, since adventure lies at the very heart of our religion. Christianity is essentially an Adventure, the greatest Adventure the world has ever known. It began, indeed, as such, for what was the Incarnation other than a great Adventure of the Son of God? To assume that its outcome was assured and known by Jesus Christ from the very beginning is to take away much of its reality and convert it into a splendidly acted drama instead of a life and death struggle. Its result was not a foregone conclusion. Rather was it a colossal effort on the part of God, by a new way, that of love, to win back to Himself an erring and rebellious race. Step by step the Captain of our Salvation fought it out and His death on Calvary may

have appeared to Him less an actual victory than a final and—so to speak—desperate effort of Divine Love to win mankind. If He saw the victory—as I believe He did—it was not so much in actuality as in promise. Though the victory be assured its consummation lies in the future. For Him, we may say in all reverence, it was indeed a Great Adventure.

Likewise for the first disciples was Christianity an Adventure. Pizarro, the Peruvian explorer, so the story runs, on an occasion when his men were disgruntled, discouraged, and mutinous, stepped forward and with his sword drew a line in the sand. Then he addressed his men thus: "On this side of the line lie home, country, wealth, honor, ease, and comfort; and on this lie toil, hardship, suffering, wounds, beggary, and death. Choose!" Every man stepped across the line! His appeal to the heroic in them had succeeded. Similarly stands Jesus Christ. He promises His followers no material gains but instead tells them they must give up all, even the closest and dearest of human ties, if they would be His disciples. They themselves feel that they are in on a very dangerous, mysterious, and somewhat desperate enterprise, as is evident when Thomas with gloomy but loyal devotion says to his colleagues,

"Let us also go that we may die with Him." In short, Jesus appears to them not as a sovereign dispensing favors or a teacher founding a school, but rather like a crusader collecting an army. He captains a spiritual Foreign Legion whose members are required to do and to dare everything for the greatest of all causes. "If any man hate not his father and mother he cannot be my disciple." "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me". Thus it was that Christianity was first presented by its Founder. Thus it appeared to His first disciples. Is that the prevalent conception to-day?

Consider for a moment the average conventional idea of Church membership and what it involves. To be a good citizen, a decent father and husband, honest and honorable in accordance with the prevalent standards, to profess a certain formal belief, with occasional church attendance and moderate church support, would satisfy the average conscience; and if to that were added some attention to the prayer life, and Bible reading, the ordinary man would feel—and his neighbors also—that he was a tolerably good Christian. This is all right so far as it goes, but it fails to elicit any particular enthusiasm. One is reminded of a story told by

Donald Hankey of a new recruit who appears in camp, whereupon the men commence to "size him up". "He doesn't smoke, or drink or swear," they say, "and is very quiet. We think he must be very religious." What a caricature of religion! Those very qualities might be possessed by a pickpocket, or a traitor. If he had been sociable, happy, and generous, few of his comrades would have immediately associated him with religion. The moral seems very plain. We have become satisfied with a negative type of Christian character. The common mind thinks of a Christian as one who does *not* do certain things—does not break the Decalogue for instance—instead of one who *does* things. We have become satisfied if a man refrains from evil instead of insisting that he actually do some good.

Here lies one great source of our weakness. We have become content with a religion defined in negative terms and as a consequence it arouses no enthusiasm. We have thought too much of the Church as a haven of rest instead of as a commitment to service; we have been content to regard it as a storehouse instead of a power house; we have thought of our congregations, and allowed them to think of themselves, as flocks of sheep to be tended instead of bands of

soldiers to be led forth to fight. We have conceived of the Gospel as static instead of dynamic; we have depicted it in terms of the bowed head instead of the set teeth. In short, we have taken the Confucian version of the Golden Rule—"Do not unto others as you would not have them do unto you"—instead of Christ's version, "Do unto others," which is positive and implies positive action. This negative attitude towards our religion even affects our interpretation of our Lord's sayings, notably so in His promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church. This is usually interpreted to mean that the powers of evil shall not be able to overcome the Church, thus picturing the Church in an entrenched, defensive position, a meaning from which the very figure used should have saved us; for a gate is not a weapon of offence but a means of defence; and, if the figure be apposite, our Lord is depicting evil, not the Church, as on the defensive and promising His aggressive, fighting Church that in attacking the very citadel of evil itself it shall be victorious.

Not only is the conventional idea of Christianity negative; it is also selfish and individualistic. This is not so true of the Roman Communion as of Protestantism, which with its

too exclusive emphasis on individual salvation has gone down by successive gradations until it reaches the acme of individual selfishness in that favorite hymn of recent evangelists, whose refrain ends in the complacent egoism of the line—"That will be glory for me". How so gross a counterfeit of Christianity could obtain such wide currency it is indeed difficult to understand. But this selfishness of institutional Christianity is evident on all sides. How many parishes are chiefly ends in themselves! How many devote almost their whole time and energy simply to maintaining their own plants! How many clergy as well as laymen think chiefly, sometimes solely, of just keeping the Church alive as if it were an end in itself! Surely there is some truth in the accusation recently made by an English writer that the Church is "drenched with self-regard".

The fact is that the average Christian has lost, if he ever had it, the sense of mission. He has forgotten, if he ever knew, that the Church was intended to be a fighting, struggling organization embarked upon a mission so desperate that it involves on the part of its members a fight to the death. He has failed to grasp this central idea, the very genius of his religion, and his failure, as Father Carey points out, is due

in large measure to the fact that "Christianity has been misrepresented as a kind of making up to God in order to save your soul from hell. Or it was an effort to develop and increase your own goodness, and so to secure your salvation. Or it was a call to leave the world to stew in its own juice while you retired into some quiet corner to bask in the sweet joys of the love and service of God." Then he goes on to say truly that "All this is simply selfish. It is a religious selfishness, but no better on that account. Holiness which stops at self is of no worth. God does not want holy people who fawn upon Him while He pets them. He wants holy people to serve Him by building His Kingdom and by uplifting a world to the end and vocation to which He has destined it. He wants lovers and workers and not paralytic pietists. Of course it is a thousand times right that we should love Him who is infinitely loveable, but love is not mere absorption in devotion; the lover must leave his Object and go and labor among the human hearts and lives for whom the Saviour died."

These words set forth clearly the striking contrast between the spirit and purpose of the Church as Christ and His early followers conceived it and the Church of to-day. Theoreti-

cally we are still aggressive and militant; but in practice, complacent, peaceful, and somnolent. We gather in our solemn assemblies and give utterance to exalted beliefs, noble ideals, and far-reaching claims; we chant them in psalm and creed, voice them in prayer, and sing them vociferously in hymns, and then—we do nothing! A stranger listening outside some of our houses of worship of a Sunday morning would think the people inside must indeed be in dead earnest about something, and if he chance to be of the opposing forces he might quake with fear as he heard pealing forth—"Thy Kingdom Come, O Lord," or "The Son of God Goes forth to War". But if he should wait to see us coming out he would discover that his fears were ill founded and that we were a very harmless sort of folk after all. For the sake of common honesty let us either tone down our language or tone up our actions, else we shall in truth deserve to be called hypocrites.

The root trouble is that we have lost the sense of Adventure. We have become too selfish and too timid, and as a result the Church has lost its coherence, its joy, its enthusiasm, its power. The Christianity of the Churches has become passive, static, crystallized, whereas Christianity in its essence is energetic, explosive, revolution-

ary. As says a recent writer in the *Contemporary Review*: "The Church is tied up with things as they are. It has been trying to referee the game of civilization as the world now plays it rather than to revolutionize the game itself. This is the real spiritual weakness of our time. We have lost sight of the venturesomeness of faith. We decorate the tombs of Abraham and Luther and the Pilgrim Fathers, men who literally went out not knowing whither they went, but we have not the courage to perpetuate their spirit and continue their Adventure. If not Christianity, then some radical economic revolution, like Socialism or Syndicalism, will finally break the evil charm that seems to have settled on us all."

Is this exaggerated language, or are these the words of truth and soberness? Does the Church of Christ fight for Him and His Cause with anything like the determination, the method, the ardor, and the enthusiasm our soldiers displayed in battling for the state? Had our country's army and the armies of our allies fought in no better spirit than does the Church against its foes, Germany would be ruling the world to-day. And how can the Church win worth while victories when instead of going at its task in the spirit of the soldier, "its every regiment is full

of men who have long ago lost heart or who never had a battle heart at all?"

A recent editorial in the *New York Times*, on the occasion of the parade of the survivors of the First Division, describes how "when they marched shoulder to shoulder, as they had marched in France, something came upon them that was scarcely of themselves at all, but rather of the crisis that had brought them together, of the spirit that had brought them through. That is the thing we must remember, for in all likelihood we have seen the last of it." Why have we seen the last of it? So far as physical war is concerned, let us devoutly hope that this is true. But, in the face of the still greater spiritual crisis that confronts the world to-day, let us as devoutly hope and pray that we may see it again and this time on the faces of those who are enrolled under the Cross of Jesus Christ, who realizes that their enrollment is not so that they may sit at ease in Zion, but rather that they may take active part in the longest and hardest of campaigns, in a life and death struggle for and with their Leader against all the entrenched forces of evil in the world. The Church must recover this soldier spirit. "We must," as Mr. Wells says, "make Peace as energetic and passionate for civilization and love as war is for

destruction and hate". This is the supreme need of the hour. It is the Church's imperative task.

This appears to be the burden of Father Carey's message. "Let us proclaim it," he says, "far and wide, for a self-absorbed Christianity will win no recruits nor fire a single heart. Blow the trumpet for the battle, make clear the objects at stake, and armed men will spring from the soil. But if we omit the building of a Kingdom and reduce Christianity to the vision of God and the saving of our own souls, we shall never gain recruits for a warrior Church. We shall have mystics and quietists, and a host of people who forget that religious self-absorption is still selfishness, but we shall not enlist those warmhearted souls who feel in their very bones that religion, if real, must be unselfish and other-regarding, who, while they would be willing to join in a campaign against cruelty and tyranny with which human life is oppressed, are yet unwilling to join in a search for God which only seems to result in religious narrowness and selfishness. Who can be enkindled by the thought of his own bare salvation? Unless you can extend the thought to cover the glory of God and the salvation of a universe, you will only enlist the selfish and the cowards."

If, therefore, Christianity is to secure the co-operation of the thinking, active, generous, red-blooded men and women of the world, the men and women who have so efficiently and enthusiastically devoted themselves to the service of humanity during this great war, the men and women who are to mould the future, it must be presented not as a thing concerned chiefly with negations, not as a selfish or self-centered institution, not as an army fighting a defensive fight, but rather as a true army of the living God, fighting aggressively, furiously, and enthusiastically for Christ and His Cause.

Christ came to give the world a Cause, the greatest Cause the world has ever known. A young unlettered countryman, without money, without power, without influence, without authority, Jesus Christ scanned the far horizon of the world, looked down through the ages, and calmly bade His disciples fling themselves against all the forces of evil entrenched therein and as calmly promised them the Victory. This was the boldest, most audacious, far-reaching, impossible project ever conceived; but its very audacity and difficulty caught the imagination and fired the spirits of men so that they responded gladly and heroically to His invitation to come and enlist for the conflict. It was this

spirit which enabled the early Church to conquer the Roman Empire and drive its gods from their thrones. "The early Christian," says Mr. Glover, "outlived the pagan, outdied him, and outthought him," and, as a consequence, we may add, 'out-fought him.' The Christian was a better man because he served a better Lord and a greater Cause, and he put that Lord and that Cause first and everything else—even life itself—a long way afterward. Thus was he able to achieve the greatest triumph in history.

The recovery of this spirit—the spirit of Adventure—is the greatest need of the Church at the present time. Not that it is the only need, but it is paramount. Change the spirit of the Church and all else follows. Cast out the devil of selfishness and self-regard and the Church will not only arise and walk, but for sheer joy will go on her way leaping and praising God. Let her call for recruits, not for a merely defensive warfare but for assault and attack, even to the extent of a forlorn hope, and as of old men will gladly flock to her standard. There is no time to lose. We are at the beginning of a new era. New and mighty forces are at work the outcome of which no man can foresee. We only know that the old is dead and a new day has dawned. The Church, like the world, is in-

deed at the cross roads. She is faced with a momentous task. She must act now.

In John Masefield's *Gallipoli* there is a striking passage in which he describes the final attack on Sulva Bay which appears as a sort of climax to all the toil and suffering that has gone before. "There was the storm, there was the crisis, the one picked hour to which this death and agony had led. Then was the hour for a casting off of self, and a setting aside of every pain and longing and sweet affection, a giving up of all that makes a man to the something that makes a race, and a going forward to death resolvedly to help out their brothers high up above in the shell bursts and the blazing gorse"; all of which, says a commentator thereon, "is a parable, as well as history. To the Church of Christ has come at last her one picked hour, her supreme opportunity, her final summons to fare forth with God in His Great Adventure. The trumpet is sounding and He, the hero Christ, is calling men after Him. With such a Leader, in such a Cause, pain and loss are forgotten and sacrifice ceases to be sacrifice. To be His and utterly committed to His adventure, is something to exult about, it is that which turns tears into joy." "Verily," as Samuel Rutherford,

that faithful venturer for Christ, used to say,  
"Verily it is a King's life to follow the Lamb."

### IT IS GLORY ENOUGH

It is glory enough to have shouted the name  
Of the living God in the teeth of an army of foes;  
To have thrown all prudence and forethought away  
And for once to have followed the call of the soul  
Out into the danger of darkness, of ruin and death.  
To have counseled with right, not success, for once,  
Is glory enough for one day.

It is glory enough for one day  
To have marched out alone before the seats of the  
scornful,  
Their fingers all pointing your way;  
To have felt and wholly forgotten the branding iron  
of their eyes,  
To have stood up proud and reliant on only your soul  
And go calmly on with your duty—  
It is glory enough.

It is glory enough to have taken the perilous risk;  
Instead of investing in stocks and paid-up insurance  
for one,  
To have fitted a cruiser for right to adventure a sea  
full of shoals;  
To sail without chart and with only the stars for  
a guide;  
To have dared to lose with all the chances for losing  
Is glory enough.

It is glory enough for one day  
To have dreamed the bright dream of the reign of  
right;

To have fastened your faith like a flag to that im-  
material staff

And have marched away, forgetting your base of  
supplies.

And while the worldly-wise see nothing but shame  
and ignoble retreat,

And tho far ahead the heart may faint and the flesh  
prove weak—

To have dreamed that bold dream is glory enough,

Is glory enough for one day.

WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH.

## II

### FIGHTING FOR A KINGDOM

*"Never was there a religion more combative than Christianity."*—BERNHARDI.

LIKE a mighty army moves the Church of God." Does it? The army has always been a favorite figure under which to view the Church, and never was it more suggestive or searching than at the present day. Let us dwell for a moment or two on the simile. An army, as we all know, exists for one specific purpose, to fight. That it has other values goes without saying. It strengthens men physically, instils patriotism, and develops a spirit of comradeship, fellowship, and democracy that must make them better citizens; it teaches team play or co-operative effort for a common end as perhaps nothing else can do. But, when all is said and done, no one would think of bringing an army into existence for any or all of these benefits.

The army comes into being and continues in existence as a fighting machine. It is meant not for peace but for war.

The fighting ability of an army depends more than anything else on what we call its morale. To keep this at a high pitch during the recent war required and called forth the utmost efforts of its officers, the government, and the entire people of this land. In a thousand ways, many of them seemingly remote from ordinary army activities, we all coöperated to keep up the morale of our men, for on this, we rightly felt, more than on any other single factor depended the ultimate result.

Now the morale of any army, like the spirit of a man, is a very subtle thing. It in turn is dependent on a number of factors, chief of which would seem to be the nature of the Cause for which the army fights. Set a group of soldiers at police duty or strike breaking or controlling mobs of civilians and it becomes pretty tiresome work. Charge them even with the task of holding a position—merely defensive duty—and you elicit no great enthusiasm. But give them a worth while Cause, be it even a forlorn hope, and a great spirit goes forth to the task. Because Napoleon dreamed of world dominion and was able to fire the imagination of his followers

with that same dream he drew forth from every last man of his battalions a devotion at once touching and marvelous and capable of accomplishing the impossible. Likewise the German Kaiser, because he too dreamed of world dominion and was able to impose his dream upon all his subjects, created a spirit of loyalty and daring which is the psychological wonder of our time. So, too, in our own country, because the vast majority of our soldiers and people at home had a consciousness, however vague it may have been in some cases, that they were fighting for the right, that they were fighting not only for their own country but for the preservation of democracy throughout the world, they achieved a spirit, a morale, such as could have been acquired in no other way. All our canteens and entertainments and movies and cigarettes doubtless had their part to play. But behind them all and vastly greater and more powerful than them all was this sense of being embarked on a righteous and world-wide Cause.

A similar phenomenon is observable in the ranks of labor to-day. Nothing like the present intense, widespread, and reckless spirit of revolt has ever been seen and it is because these men are now fighting not for mere increase of wages or improvement of conditions but for the su-

premacv of their class. However we may deplore the motive, the fact remains that it is higher in at least this respect, that it is not so narrowly selfish as heretofore because its horizon has been widened to take in a whole group. It is this wide outlook, this slight tinge of unselfishness, that has given birth to a spirit and morale with which the world must reckon. The principle then is clear. A great vision evokes a correspondingly great spirit. Given a great and worth while Cause and the proper morale will follow.

What shall we say of the Church? Is its morale high? Does it give evidence of possessing this ardent, enthusiastic, and unconquerable spirit? Does it impress either the insider or the outsider as being wholeheartedly committed to a great Cause? The point of view of the man outside the Church may be readily gathered from any afternoon's round of pastoral visits. At one house I chance to find the man at home; but almost before the greetings are over he calls up the stairs, "Mary, there's someone from the Church to see you," and I have the greatest difficulty in convincing him that I have come to see him and am scarcely able to induce him to remain in the room during my visit. I find that this man is not opposed to the Church,

in fact he quite believes in it and approves of it, but he has the idea that it is chiefly, if not solely, for women and children. His children attend the Sunday school and his wife represents him at service. Has this man, and his tribe is legion, the conception of the Church as an army? With all due appreciation of the wonderful things women have done and are doing, it will readily be agreed that had our army been composed of women the Kaiser and his minions would have had a rather easy time of it.

When I endeavor to talk with another man and show him some reasons why he should take a more active interest in the Church, he gets quite on the defensive and appears to think that I am reflecting on his character. "I don't steal or drink or abuse my wife and children," he goes on, the whole burden of his defence being summed up in the phrase, "I haven't done any wrong." Altogether aside from this evidence of spiritual bluntness, this man is obsessed, as are multitudes of others, with the negative aspect of religion. He thinks it sufficient not to have done any harm. Imagine that attitude in the army. Imagine a soldier when taken to task for some dereliction of duty pleading that he had done no wrong, saying in effect, "I haven't

shot the Captain or played the traitor or violated any of the army regulations or traditions. What's the fuss about?" The reply of his superior officer would scarcely be fit to print, and an army composed of such negative characters would fall an easy victim to any group of fighting men.

To give one other instance, there is the man who tells you that he was brought up in the Church, always attended Sunday school, etc., but that he has now given it up because he "sees no good in it". Again, altogether aside from the correctness of his statement, his attitude of mind is scarcely that of one who conceives of the Church as an army; for what man ever joined the army in war time for the good he himself might get out of it? Does he not rather make a willing sacrifice of everything, even life itself, in order not that he may get something out of it but that he may contribute something to it?

Nor do we find the general attitude of mind of the man within the Church very different. Consider the avowed reasons which take men to church or lead them to a particular house of worship. The time is happily almost past when men attend church for social or business advancement, but it is questionable whether love of

music or attachment to a popular preacher are very much higher motives. At any rate they are scarcely adequate and betray a misconception of the Church's purpose exactly parallel to that of the man outside. Both alike assume that the purpose of church attendance is "to get some good out of it" for oneself, the only difference being that the man without feels not the need of it while the man within does. Both alike have a view of the Church that, to say the least, is partial and inadequate and when allowed exclusive possession of the field would seem to be actually inconsistent with and antagonistic to the fundamental idea of Christianity. The background of all these and similar motives is after all selfishness, even though it be on a higher sphere than usual. To desire spiritual good for oneself is a somewhat worthy aim from some standpoints, but to make that the chief end of one's existence can scarcely be called Christian.

The marks of this selfishness of the average Christian are manifold and much in evidence. The rented pew system itself is based on the theory that those who are able or willing to pay have certain rights in the House of God, just as if, even granting the existence of such rights, that were not the very last place on earth to

assert them. In how many churches where the pews are free do not persons often appear disgruntled if the seat they are in the habit of using happens to be occupied? These may seem like small things, but they are conditions which we cannot imagine existing in the Apostolic Church, and are indicative of a spirit which is utterly alien and foreign to real Christianity. Likewise the attitude of indifference and even hostility—happily now passing—towards Missions and Social Service on the part of so many of our congregations is another mark of our individual and corporate spiritual selfishness. These all evidence an utter lack of comprehension of the true nature of our religion whose essence is to give and not to get, to minister and not to be ministered unto.

How striking is the contrast between all of this and the spirit of the army! "It is this contrast," says one of the writers in *The Church and the Furnace*, "which is to me the outstanding impression of the Front. The contrast between the heights to which men, generally unconsciously, rise in the pursuit of duty—the self-giving, the sacrifice, the whole souled service of the army and all the 'happy valiancy' and freedom to dare the impossible which go with them—and the cold, calculating, uninspired profes-

sion of Christianity which forms so large a part of the practical religion of the Church. The contrast between the pusillanimous caution and diplomatic casuistry with which we Churchmen have been accustomed to face our great problems, and the stern grip of realities which sets its face to take Bapaume or Messines, and starts out to do it because it ought to be done, and demands of men who are ready for anything that they shall give themselves as the price of doing it. The contrast of the high-sounding phrases of our militant hymns and ecclesiastical discussions and flabby irresolution of our plans and actions for the Kingdom of God, when compared with the unselfconscious heroism of our fighting men who talk so little about their ideals and so gloriously fulfil them, as if to translate ideals into action were not only natural but inevitable."

Is this statement exaggerated, or does it fairly set forth a painful truth? And, if the latter, what is the way out? If the Church of to-day lacks both the spirit of the army and of essential Christianity, how is it to secure or regain it? The answer is simple. By turning the view outward instead of inward, by thinking of others instead of self, by having an objective clear enough and great enough to enlist and enthrall and fuse all our energies and aspirations into

one overwhelming and compelling aim and purpose which shall transcend all lesser motives and obliterate all selfish desires. Is there such an objective? Has the Church such an aim? Surely she has, and it stands out clear and unmistakable if we will but turn once more to the words and deeds of the Church's Founder.

Jesus Christ came to found a Kingdom, not in some distant heaven but here upon this earth. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" was the announcement of His forerunner, and that theme the Master took up and made the burden of all His teaching and preaching. It is the subject of most of His parables and the text of most of His discourses. The Sermon on the Mount is its constitution, the Apostles are its officers and agents. When He arrives it is no longer merely at hand but He tells them plainly, "The Kingdom of Heaven is in the midst of you" or "among you". This was no metaphor but a fact. The seed was already sown. The Kingdom was already in existence in His Person and in the person of His disciples, and it was destined to spread until it compassed the whole earth.

This was the most audacious dream ever dreamed—far surpassing those of Caesar or of Kaiser—aiming at nothing less than the fullest kind of world dominion, including every race

and class and condition of men. Its sheer audacity smote the imagination of His followers and laid hold on them with such compelling power as to enable them to fling themselves heedless against a world. Self was completely forgotten. Like St. Paul these early disciples were willing to be anathema for the sake of the brethren. They thought only in terms of the Kingdom of God. For this they prayed and toiled and suffered and died—and conquered. Such fighters were invincible. Mighty Rome could no longer ignore them. The dream had become reality. The Church went forward at a rate which has never since been even approximated. The Kingdoms of this world were indeed fast becoming the Kingdoms of our God. And these glorious victories were due chiefly to the fact that the one clear-cut aim and purpose of the Church was the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

It was not long, however, before this concept of the Kingdom lost its exclusive prominence and sank somewhat into the background. The followers of these early enthusiasts came to realize that they were mistaken both as to the time and method of the final or complete coming of the Kingdom. They had expected it very soon and hope deferred made them somewhat sick at heart. The foes were so powerful, the

odds so great, and the full victory so long delayed, that they commenced to lose courage. Taking counsel of their fears rather than their hopes, they concluded that the task was impossible and that consequently the Kingdom was not meant for this world. Thus they postponed it to another time and place and devoted themselves to the culture of their own individual souls—or the propitiation of God by the proper formalities—in the hope of securing admission to the Kingdom hereafter. Thus was the arm of the Church paralyzed. Thus was adopted a point of view which has colored and affected the whole history and conception of the Church to such a degree that its original and prime function has become so obscured as to be almost lost. In a world it was commissioned to redeem, the Church gradually lapsed into selfish and indolent complacency, devoting most of its energy to the saving of its own soul.

If, however, the Church is once more to do its full work in the world, if it is even to save itself, we must at all costs hew our way back to the original position and place once again in the forefront of all our preaching and teaching, and praying and living, the concept of the Kingdom of God. And this must be conceived not as something in the dim and shadowy future, not

as something purely spiritual—which usually means unreal—not as an ideal of single blessedness hereafter, not a safe haven for timid and unadventurous souls, but rather as an actual fact, a present reality, a state of affairs here upon earth—a thing already partially existent for whose complete realization we must strive with all our might. The Kingdom of God means simply that men in all their associations and mutual relations shall live and act in accordance with God's laws. It means peace instead of war, harmony instead of discord, mutual trust instead of envy and suspicion, love instead of hate, service instead of greed, coöperation instead of competition—in short, a state of human society wherein God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

“An impossible programme!” does someone say? If so, then woe to the world and its boasted civilization; for here alone lies not only its salvation but the only promise of its continuance. This truth is being increasingly recognized to-day and especially by our lay prophets. “All mankind,” says Mr. Wells, “is seeking God. There is not a nation or a city on the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the spirit of God. The Kingdom of God on earth is not a metaphor, nor a mere spiritual

state, not a dream, not an uncertain project; it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind." And in another splendid passage he writes: "We need a standard so universal that the platelayer may say to the barrister or the duchess, or the Anzac soldier to the Sinn Feiner or Chinaman, 'What are we two doing for it?' And to fill the place of that 'It' no other idea is great enough or commanding enough but only the world Kingdom of God. However long he may have to hunt, the blind man who is seeking service and an end to bickerings will come to that at last because, of all the thousand other things he may clutch at, nothing else can satisfy his manifest need." And, we may safely add, nothing else can satisfy the manifest need of the world.

Nothing else, moreover, will enable us to conserve the peace our armies have so gloriously won. To quote the words of one of those writers who have been forced by the great war to think deeply and clearly and to examine again their foundations, "A relapse into the ways of the so-called peace of the years immediately before the war can only be avoided by great effort. The only certain counter effort is to enlist us all in a common enterprize, united by a single vast ideal. Preach the Kingdom of God in its

sublimity, in all its range and all its glorious hopes, show us it is something for us all, call us all to live and work for it, enlist us all in the service of the Master, and make Him living, concrete, and appealing. Do not offer us Church privileges or tell us that we ought to go to church. Charge us rather with Church responsibilities. Show us God as the King of all the world, bid us consecrate ourselves and act and live." And, in similar vein, Father Carey exhorts: "Whatever is our vocation, brethren of the clergy and laity, let us up and doing; let us 'get on with the war'. A world is to be saved from sin, a world is to be constituted in righteousness, through a Kingdom which is to be built. Up then and let us be doing; there is no more time to waste. The world waits to be redeemed and God waits on us. Christ is at the head of His hosts and calls each of us by name to follow. Burst from the bands of selfishness and let the finest thoughts of your heart prevail. Let us follow where He leads; suffer as He suffered; strive as He strove. Let it be your sufficient reward that you have worked at the finest work in the world; that in the army where God was leader you at least have been a soldier. And if as a result of all your loss and toil something will have been added to the Kingdom you serve,

you will at least thank God that you have not lived in vain."

This, then, the bringing in of the Kingdom of God on earth, the spreading of Christianity in a largely unchristian world, is the Church's main business, indeed her only business. Individual salvation must come in by the way. Driven by a passion for the Kingdom of God, the Church must learn to care infinitely more for winning the world for Jesus Christ than for matters affecting her own life and institutions. She must devote all her resources to that one tremendous objective and discover and experience as a Church the fundamental Christian law that "whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it." Well might the Church adopt as its slogan and battle cry, that glorious song of Wm. Blake:

"I will not cease from mental strife,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land."

This is the thing for which we are to fight—the progressive realization here upon earth of the Kingdom of God.

This alone holds out any hope for a solution

of the pressing problems before us. In three great fields must its laws and principles be brought to bear; viz., the field of international relationships, the field of racial animosities, and the field of class antagonisms. When men in these groups can be made to cease thinking of themselves and think of others, to cease clamoring for their rights and determine simply to do their duties, when the great truths of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man come to be increasingly realized and acted upon, the world's sore problems will be in the way of solution; and all of this is contained within the concept of the Kingdom of God. Here we have an ideal broad enough for a race, high enough to satisfy our deepest cravings and difficult enough, yet sufficiently immediate and practical, to call forth our supremest efforts. Even its partial realization would transform the world. If this indeed is the Church's chief task then there is something of painful truth in Chesterton's well known epigram: "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and never tried." Surely now, if ever, is the time to give it a thorough trial. Let the Church set out boldly and confidently to fight for the Kingdom of God.

A story is told of an Indian regiment during

the Sepoy Rebellion, which for some insubordination had been deprived of its colors. Its Commander on one occasion called them out and pointing to an apparently inaccessible and impregnable height, which had to be taken, said: "Men, your colors are on yonder height." The charge was made; and, though only a few returned, these joyously received from the hand of their Captain the colors they had thus so gloriously retrieved. The Church, as the Army of Jesus Christ, by reason of its selfishness, indifference, faint-heartedness, and resulting loss of influence and inefficiency, has in the minds of large numbers of men forfeited all right to its colors. If not actually deprived of them by its Commander it may well be that He is actually contemplating bestowing them on worthier combatants. At any rate, there He seems to stand, facing His faltering Church and pointing to the strongly entrenched and apparently unconquerable forces of evil in the world and exclaiming: "Your colors are in yonder conflict." God grant that we may so respond as to retrieve them and prove worthy to bear the Name of our Crucified King. Forward, for the Kingdom of God!

### III

## THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

*"The true God is not a spiritual troubadour, wooing the hearts of men and women to no purpose. The true God goes through the world like fifes and drums and flags, calling for recruits along the street."*—H. G. WELLS.

ULTIMATELY there are only two views which a man can take of God. Either He is a Being to be used or to be obeyed; to be exploited for our own ends or served for His own purposes. When one has chosen his point of view he has really nothing in common with one who has chosen the other, for these two views are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive. The religion of exploitation is of course much older and more popular than the religion of obedience. It is characteristic of all pagan religions, with their elaborate and pitiful and clumsy efforts to use God for human ends—efforts which have been aptly described as "trying to pull wires in the spiritual world". Most

of the ancients thought of God as a Being to be used and as a consequence their worship consisted chiefly of efforts to curry favor with Him, to get on His right side, so to speak, so that He in turn would bless and protect and prosper them. The Jews alone, of all early peoples, grasped the idea that God was a Being to be obeyed, but even their realization of it was very imperfect and inadequate.

This truth, however, was taken up by our Lord and developed and given preëminent place in His life and teaching. "Lo, I come to do thy will", is the sole purpose of His Incarnation. "Thy will be done", is the very heart and center of His great Prayer. So copious and clear, indeed, is the evidence of this attitude of His that we may assert with a recent writer, without fear of contradiction, that "The Christian Church knows of one attitude towards God, and one only, namely, loyal obedience, freely given as a tribute to His goodness without any reservation whatsoever. We are not concerned with trying to bring God to our side because of His power, only with trying to range ourselves on His side because of His goodness. The idea of God as a power to be exploited rather than a person to be obeyed does in fact prevail widely in the Church. But until we

have put it away completely we are Christians only in name. We can understand nothing of the meaning of Gethsemane or Calvary, although we may spend many hours in church during each Holy Week."

Which of these views we now ask is the more prevalent in the Church of to-day? Does the pagan idea, that God is a Being to be used, or the Christian, that He is a Person to be obeyed, hold the ground? Which attitude is indicated by the prayers of the average Christian? With which idea do we offer our own petitions? As a start on our inquiry the following striking passage from Studdert Kennedy's *The Hardest Part* may prove both searching and illuminating.

"Scene: In the trenches during a heavy bombardment. It lasted over two hours. We could do nothing but sit still and wait. A sergeant on one side of me swore great oaths and made jokes by turns. A man somewhere on the other side kept praying aloud, in a broken and despairing kind of way, shivering out piteous supplications to God for protection and safety.

"I wish that chap would chuck that praying. It turns me sick. I'd much rather he swore like the sergeant. It's disgusting, somehow. It isn't religion, it's cowardice. It isn't prayer, it's wind. I'd like to shut him up. He prob-

ably seldom, if ever, prayed before, and now he substitutes prayer for pluck. I wouldn't mind if he prayed for pluck, but it's all for safety. I hate this last resort kind of religion; it's blasphemy. The decent men all despise it. Look at the sergeant's face. That other chap keeps banging into his mind a connection between Christ and cowardice. That's where the blasphemy comes in. There is not, and there cannot be, any connection between Christ and cowardice. I wonder who is to blame for this miserable caricature of Christian prayer. Is it the chap himself? Is it just common blue funk, or are his teachers partly to blame, who led him to suppose that God could and would hearken to that piteous wailing? I wonder if there is something wrong in the way men learn to pray?"

Ever since reading the above, the last sentence has been running through my mind, and I, too, have been wondering if "there is something wrong in the way men learn to pray". I believe there is.

Stripped of its dramatic setting, is not the above prayer characteristic of a considerable number, not to say the great majority, of the prayers of Christians? Prayers for self, in one form or another, surely bulk very large. In times of peace and safety they are little

more than formal and polite petitions for a continuance of God's blessing, frequently in the form of material, business, or social advancement. In times of suffering or distress, they are offered with greater intensity for alleviation, preservation, or restoration of the individual or some dear one belonging to him. Such prayers frequently end, of course, with a reference to the doing of God's will, but that as a rule is only a courteous after-thought, put forth with little intensity or earnestness simply because at heart it is not wanted if it involves the denial of the petition for self.

During the last war, for instance, how many men prayed for the first time in years or the first time in their lives, and then chiefly if not solely to ask that God would save them from wounds or death? One is reminded of the sailor in a storm at sea who prayed: "O Lord, I have never asked You for anything before, and if you will only get me out of this I'll never bother You again as long as I live." We may smile at its naive frankness; but, that aside, must we not admit that it is typical of very many prayers of so-called Christian men and women?

Consider the prayers that were offered in our churches during the war. What a large propor-

tion of them were requests for the physical safety and return of the men! In some instances, indeed, when such prayers were not answered, the petitioners gave up God and religion altogether, thus affording the clearest evidence that their conception of religion was that God could be of use to them. In other instances, the prayers were on a higher plane and included petitions for the moral and spiritual welfare of loved ones. But in comparatively few cases, one suspects, did they reach the full Christian standard of devotion to God and His Kingdom such as would enable the petitioners to say: "Take my boy, my husband, my father, and use him as seems best to You. If his death will further the Kingdom of God more than his safe return, hard as it will be, that is what I most want."

This selfishness in prayer, tinged often with an element of magic and superstition, is further evident in the popular conception of prayer in Christ's name. "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it for you" seems such a sweeping and unqualified statement that millions of people have come to look upon the phrase "Through Jesus Christ our Lord" as a sort of magic "open sesame", a sort of password that will give those who possess it and use it aright

anything they wish. To such persons prayer is a sort of blank check on the bank of Heaven which is sure of being honored if only it bear the proper endorsement, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord". Millions of such checks were presented at the beginning of the war, but they did not stop the rape of Belgium. Millions were offered by the people at home, by friend and foe alike, and how many remained unanswered! "Religion," says a chaplain from the front, "religion as an insurance policy against accident in the day of battle is discredited in the army. The men have lost what faith in it they ever had." And this was to be expected.

We have absolutely no warrant in reason or in Scripture for assuming that God would necessarily answer such prayers. On the contrary, as He did not stop the mouths of wild beasts or quench the fires that tortured and consumed His saints of old, nor send His angel legions to save His only beloved Son from the cruel death of the Cross, so He does not change the course of a shell or bullet because it happens to be coming toward one who has addressed Him in correct and approved fashion. To think otherwise leads inevitably to disappointment, disillusion, and frequently to skepticism and atheism. Nowhere in the New Testament is the Christian

promised immunity from hardship or pain or suffering; but on the contrary our Lord warns His followers that "the disciple is not above his Master nor the servant above his Lord," and tells them plainly that they are called to suffer for His sake and the Kingdom's. Christ came not to relieve man from suffering in a disordered world but to save him from sin in a wicked one.

All of this, however, must not be construed so as to discourage prayer in any form or to limit God's power or willingness to answer. It should instead provide a more solid basis and give better proportion and direction to our petitions. Of course, since God is our Father, we may approach Him in love and confidence with all our most trifling and personal concerns and be sure of a sympathetic hearing. But the point is that prayer must not be limited, as is too frequently the case, to requests for blessings for one's self. Such petitions doubtless have their place, as do prayers for material things, but they cannot be put forth with assurance no matter how strong the faith or how correct the form in which they are uttered. They will as a rule be granted or denied according as the answer helps to forward the Kingdom of God. Consequently they can only be put forth conditionally. The prayer for safety is frequently answered in

the negative, as was evidenced thousands of times in the recent war, because the sacrifice involved was needed to further God's Kingdom. The prayer for "pluck", however, for the courage and strength to "carry on", may always be sure of its answer.

We need, then, a better sense of proportion in our prayers—fewer prayers for safety and more for pluck, fewer for self and more for God and His Cause. To rest content with the majority of our petitions offered for self is to remain forever in the rudimentary stage of religion with its insistent demand, "Give us what we want", instead of progressing to the full Christian standard, "Thy will be done". Here is where we have all gone lamentably astray. Naturally and easily we have lapsed into the pagan conception of religion. As Mr. Kennedy truly says, "If we try to enlist the help of God to gain ends which are primarily our own, then we are using religion instead of obeying it. We are trying to secure a powerful Ally; not to become more efficient servants of a perfect King. It means that the center of our thought is the power of God rather than His goodness. We think of the Power which might do so much for us more than of the Goodness which has an overwhelming claim upon our obedience." That

God has "an overwhelming claim upon our obedience" is the thing we need to remember to-day. That is the concept we need to have recalled to our minds and burned in upon our consciousness. Much of the weakness of modern Christianity is due to our having lost sight of this elemental truth. First and foremost God demands obedience. Not until we have grasped this fact are we in a position to understand the essential meaning and value of Christian prayer, whose chief purpose is not that we may receive good things for ourselves but rather that we may become better servants of God.

We see all this clearly in our human relationships. A child at first thinks of his father merely as a provider, one who supplies his wants and grants his desires. As he grows older, however, he becomes less selfish and endeavors more and more to ask only for those things that please his father, or, at least, do not displease him. At this stage he is rather ashamed to be seeking merely things for himself and begins to take an interest in his father's plans and purposes. Then there comes a time when, such is the harmony of spirit between them, petition becomes unnecessary and in a measure seems unworthy, and he seeks first and foremost his father's presence and companionship. And at last, after long

communion, the state is reached when the son has caught a vision of the greatness and importance of the father's plans and, as a loyal son, enters so heartily into them that all thought of self is lost and he desires more than anything else in the world the furtherance of those plans. Some such progress should be evident in the life of Christians. We should not rest forever in the child stage. With the years, our sympathetic understanding of God and His purposes should increase and our prayers consequently become less and less concerned with self and more and more with God and His Kingdom. Otherwise we are pagan rather than Christian.

This quality of Christian prayer is clearly seen in our Lord's teaching and practice. His promise to answer all prayers made in His Name must not be dragged down to the level of pagan magic to serve man's selfish ends. Recalling that for the Hebrew the name of a person stood for, and in large measure represented, his character, we get the key to its real significance. Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, thus means prayer offered as He offered it, in His character as a loyal and devoted Son. We see it illustrated in the great pattern prayer He gave us, which though it does not contain His name is nevertheless drenched with His spirit.

There He prays as a loyal and devoted Son concerned chiefly and first of all, not with His own welfare, but with His Heavenly Father's business. He commands us to pray likewise. The hallowing of His Name, the bringing in of His Kingdom, the doing of His Will, come first in time and first in importance; and after that, and a long way after, come the things we ask for ourselves. These latter may be granted and frequently are, yet not on the ground of special love or favor to us but because such answer helps to forward His Kingdom. That was the only answer Christ ever desired. That is the only answer any loyal son wants.

The Lord's Prayer, indeed, takes on new meaning and interest when viewed from this standpoint. It becomes the soldier's prayer for strength to carry on. "Heavenly Father, Supreme Commander, grant me, Thy soldier, so to fight the good fight that Thy Holy Name may be honored and revered by all; by my feeble efforts may Thy glorious Kingdom be advanced; in me and by me may Thy perfect Will increasingly prevail; since mortal flesh is unequal to the struggle without sustenance, provide me my necessary rations from day to day; and that I may be free to fight my best, rid me of the heavy burden—the impedimenta—of my sins;

give me such guidance and direction that I may march ever forward toward the objective—in short, provide merely for Thy soldier's needs so that he may wage constant and successful warfare for Thee and Thy Kingdom!" Thus interpreted, this glorious prayer loses every trace of selfishness and magic and superstition and becomes a stirring, militant, aspiring, and truly Christian petition for the forwarding of the Kingdom of God.

This characteristic of Christian prayer is evident again on that notable occasion in our Lord's life which is known as the agony in the Garden, a scene which is usually misinterpreted and misunderstood. There we find Christ face to face with the temptation to offer a selfish prayer. The Cross with all that it meant of suffering and agony and loneliness and misunderstanding was before Him, and His human nature shrank from it. Was there no other way? Might He not be spared this? Should He not ask His Father to let Him off? "Father, let this cup pass from Me," comes from His lips. But this was not, as usually interpreted, His real prayer, followed by an act of submission to the inevitable in the words: "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." No! The first phrase is His temptation—the thing He

is fighting against with all His strength; and the last petition, instead of an afterthought of meek and filial submission, is His real prayer, intense and passionate. "Thy will be done" is still in the forefront of His thought and desire as it had always been throughout His life; His own welfare and deliverance from suffering, second—a long way second. His prayer is a determined, deliberate, unequivocal assertion of the supremacy and primacy of God's will, and after it He walks forth in such calm majesty and glory to fulfil that Will, at any cost, that His foes fall down on their faces at sight of Him. There is Christian prayer at its highest, and there we see at work the very spirit and quality which is its essential characteristic.

God has indeed an overwhelming claim upon our obedience! Prayer enables us, in some measure, to satisfy that claim. But that is not all. It is not to the blind obedience of an exacting Potentate that we are called, but rather to the glad, free will and reasonable service of fellow workers and sons. And herein lies a deeper and more compelling motive than is provided by the mere sense of duty or loyalty, strong as that may be in some lives. God demands obedience, y<sup>e</sup>s. But He also calls for service. He requests coöperation and, let us

say it boldly, He needs man's help. The ultimate question as to whether God really needs anything is both too large and too abstract to require or warrant discussion here. The plain fact is that so far as this world is concerned God needs man's help. It has been well and truly said that "God alone can save the world but God cannot save the world alone". His plans and purposes require man's coöperation.

Never was falser platitude uttered than that familiar line of the poet, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again". It does nothing of the kind. Rather does it lie inert until it becomes incarnate in some human breast and inspires that human to fight for it to the death. God can defeat the Germans. Yes! But not without the aid of the guns and bayonets and wounds and blood of men. God can save the heathen in far off lands, Yes! But not without the consecrated money of His disciples at home. God can clean the slums and purify our politics, Yes! But He delays doing so until His spirit takes hold of some few brave souls who address themselves to the task with all their might. Whether this is because of some necessity of His nature or of creation; or whether it is of His own free condescension is really an academic question, though, for my part, I see no reason to accept

the former view, popular as it is to-day. It is sufficient to realize that for some mysterious reason, unknown to us, God has conditioned the advance of His Kingdom, the success of all His plans for the world, upon man's coöperation. Therefore, as a practical matter of fact, it is true to say in the most literal sense that God needs man.

Once this truth is grasped, what a transcendently powerful motive it supplies! If, on the one hand, as Mr. Wells and other modern writers assert, this is due to divine limitation, then what a glorious chance for man to come to the rescue of this partially imprisoned, struggling, agonizing God and set Him free! If, on the other hand, from the full Christian standpoint, we see in it an act of divine condescension, an expression of surpassing faith in man in allowing him this power to make or mar His perfect plans, then surely that heart must be dull and cold indeed that does not overflow with humble and awesome gratitude at such amazing trust and determine at all costs to justify it to the full. An old legend relates how Jesus Christ on His return to heaven was greeted by the angels and questioned by them about His earthly task. In reply He tells them that He has entrusted His Gospel with all its far-reaching

issues to His few faithful disciples. The angels are amazed and begin to utter their doubts. "Those men are weak and selfish and disloyal," they say. "It is a tremendous risk." "I know," is the quiet reply, "but I cannot help it. It is the only plan I have."

This, so far as we can see, is eternally true. God's Cause demands man's coöperation. It is the only plan He has. Man, therefore, must not fail. For his own sake, for his brethren's sake, and for God's sake, must he prove a faithful soldier and servant and fellow worker in and for the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom is not yet won. The fight is still on. This is therefore no time to sit at ease in Zion. Until the contest is over no Christian has the right to think for a moment of his own welfare, his own ease or comfort or safety. He is enrolled "for the duration of the war" and his duty is to fight to the bitter end.

Prayer is the chief means of enabling a Christian to become and continue a good fighter, since, rightly conceived, it consists not in asking favors for self but rather in placing one's self at God's disposal. Prayer is aligning oneself with God's purpose, listening to His voice, receiving His commands, and then consecrating one's self to fulfil them. True prayer is not a method

whereby man can make use of God; but, contrariwise, a means whereby God is enabled to make use of man. This thought is well expressed by Father Carey when he says: "In its deepest sense prayer is an opening of the resources of our personality to be used by God as He thinks best for His purposes. . . . Petition is a subordinate part of prayer. . . . Primarily it is an act of self-surrender to the purposes of God. . . . So our daily prayer means 'Use me again to-day'!" While other functions and values are not denied, this should be more clearly recognized as the chief and ultimate purpose of prayer; and the very fact that this to many may seem strange doctrine is sad evidence of the distance we have travelled from primitive and essential Christianity. We must, at all costs, recover this conception for the Church and place it in the forefront of our Christian teaching and practice.

There is silence in the evening when the long days  
cease,  
And a million men are praying for an ultimate re-  
lease  
From strife and sweat and sorrow—they are pray-  
ing for peace,  
But God is marching on.

We pray for rest and beauty that we know we cannot earn,  
And we are ever asking for a honey sweet return;  
But God will make it bitter, make it bitter, till we learn  
That with tears the race is run.

And did not Jesus perish to bring to men, not peace,  
But a sword, a sword for battle, and a sword that should not cease?  
Two thousand years have passed us. Do we still want peace  
Where the sword of Christ has shone?

Yes! Christ (our Captain) perished to present us with a sword,  
That strife should be our portion and more strife our reward,  
For toil and tribulation and the Glory of the Lord  
And the sword of Christ are one.\*

“God is marching on”—to ultimate victory; and we must march with Him.

Christian prayer, let it be repeated, is not bending God’s will to ours, but bending our will to God’s. It starts with the assumption that His will is best, His purpose supreme, and goes on the supposition that God and man are allies working together for a great Cause, in the pursuit of which all that concerns a man sinks into insignificance. “Thy will be done,”

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\* From “Peace” in *Marlborough and other Poems*, by Charles Hamilton Sorley.

here and everywhere, first, last, and all the time, is its constant and passionate petition. Thy will be done in me; Thy will be done by me, and through me, with all the strength and influence that I have, so that my feeble efforts, my utter sacrifice if need be, added to and coöperating with all the forces that make for righteousness, may be enabled to advance the Kingdom of God by so much as a hair's breadth! No act of meek submission to the inevitable is this; but an enthusiastic, joyous, powerful, positive aspiration which makes man a fit and pliable and willing instrument of the Almighty in the furtherance of His great ends.

“O use me, Lord, use even me,  
Just as Thou wilt, and when and where,  
Until Thy blessed face I see  
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

## IV

### THE USE OF SACRAMENTS

PRAYER and Sacrament belong together. They are ascending and descending angels on the ladder of life which reaches from earth to heaven. In prayer man reaches up towards God and in Sacraments God comes down to man. In neither case is the purpose primarily a selfish one. Man approaches God in prayer, not simply for his own benefit but that he may yield himself in loving service. God comes to man in the Sacraments to give him divine help and strength. God needs man and man needs God. The response to these respective needs is through Prayer and Sacrament.

That the present condition of affairs with regard to the Sacraments is far from satisfactory will be generally admitted. Vast numbers of Christian men and women know nothing at

all about the Sacramental life. From one year's end to the other they never approach the altar. They do not understand its meaning or value or seem to feel its need. If you were to ask them why they remain away they would probably tell you they "didn't see the use". Between the altar and the common man there seems to be a great gulf fixed. How is it to be bridged? Again, multitudes of earnest Christians come only at intervals and then as a sort of pious duty to God. They look upon Sacraments as mere ordinances or devout observances for occasional and special use, but with no vital bearing upon their daily lives. Frequently such persons will tell you they are "not good enough" to come to Communion, which reason, if sincere, betrays the most pitiful misconception of the Sacramental idea—for Sacraments are no more meant to be signs of virtue than medicine is a sign of health. In short, the main point seems to be completely missed by the vast majority of persons. It seems scarcely to have entered their heads, that the one great purpose of the Sacraments is to help man.

That man needs help will scarcely be questioned. No one can live the Christian life in his own strength. What it involves is comprehensively, yet tersely, set forth in the following

paragraph by the Rev. A. Herbert Gray in an Essay to "Chaplains in Council".

"Fundamental Christianity is a way of living ordinary life and is not, to begin with, a mere matter either of abstinence or attending church. A saved man, to Christ's thought, is a man living all day and every day in a certain way—the way of a disciple. He is not a man primarily concerned about his own soul. There is something selfish about that, which, by the way, Tommy sees quite clearly. He is primarily concerned about serving Christ. That means being a certain kind of employer and employee. It means doing business on certain unselfish and upright principles. It means a certain kind of home life. It means being a certain kind of husband, father, brother, and so on. It involves a certain exacting attitude to the poor and all sufferers. It means staying in the world and there proving yourself a good friend—a sociable, charitable person. It means courage and endurance. It often means self-sacrifice and a measure of loneliness and opposition. *It is so hard that it is ridiculously impossible to any man who is not daily sustained by the grace of God.*"

How ridiculously impossible it is without God, any man can easily prove to his own satisfaction by seriously attempting such a pro-

gramme. If he be both earnest and candid he will be forced again and again to give utterance in effect, if not in word, to that touchingly human petition of the saintly Fenelon, "Lord Jesus, take my heart, I cannot give it Thee. And when Thou hast it, keep it; I cannot keep it for Thee; and save me in spite of myself."

The earnest cry for help is never in vain. In a thousand indirect ways—through altered circumstances, the ministration of friends, the wonders of nature, the revelation of His Word, the messages of His representatives, and also more directly through the illumination of the intellect, the stirring of the conscience, and the quickening of the mystical sense, does God help man. Some choice souls indeed are able to talk with Him face to face and experience to the full the truth set forth in the familiar lines:

"And His that gentle voice we hear,  
Soft as the breath of even,  
That checks each thought, that calms each fear,  
And speaks of heaven."

But, after all, such mystic experiences are for the few rather than the many. Man is not pure spirit. He has a material body and normally comes in contact with spirit through material means. Even the spirits who enter this sphere through the medium of our spiritualistic

friends must perforce utilize matter in the form of a table or ouija board! Indeed, all human experience teaches us that spirit comes in contact with spirit in this world of ours normally and usually through the medium of matter. Soul converses with soul through the physical medium of the human voice. Pleasure is indicated by a smile, anger by a frown, and affection with a kiss. What are these but sacraments of our daily life—means by which spirit expresses itself? Likewise when God created man He did not do so directly, by mere fiat of His will, but made him out of the dust of the earth. He spoke to Moses in the burning bush, gave a message to Noah by the rainbow, and healed the children of Israel by means of a brazen serpent. Similarly, in the New Testament Christ heals a blind man with clay and cures the sick with a touch or a word. He feeds the five thousand with loaves and fishes. Are not all these acts similar in principle to His promise to cleanse the soul through the medium of water and nourish it by means of bread and wine?

All nature is in a sense sacramental. The mountains, the sea, the sunset, the rose, and the stars have each their own message to convey, and to the man of vision "every common bush is aflame with God". To ignore or deny this, in

the interests of a false spirituality, is to go contrary to our common experience as well as to the revelation of Holy Writ. We must, therefore, set the two great Sacraments of the Church in this sacramental background to appreciate their reasonableness and understand them aright. On the other hand, we must realize that the Sacraments of Christ's ordaining go beyond all this. They are not merely symbols or ordinances but realities, in that they actually convey the thing which they symbolize. Through them man comes into direct and vital contact with God and receives His very life into his own soul. Thus the Christian Sacraments are God's most powerful and practical means of helping His faithful and struggling servants.

But we must not drag them down to serve only our selfish ends. To develop and perfect our own characters is but a portion of our task. For the Christian, self-culture is not an end in itself but a means to a further end. His duty is not merely to be good but to be good for something, not simply to be a moral man but an efficient fighter. He must fight not only the evil within but the evil without and be concerned not so much with saving his own soul as with the saving of others. So far have we fallen away from this position that the whole Church

needs nothing less than a complete reorientation, a conversion from paganism to Christianity, from the theory that God is to be used for the individual's benefit to the conviction that God is to be obeyed and served for the furtherance of His own plans. Man is "saved to serve", and only as this becomes clearly and unfalteringly his aim can he realize the deep significance and value of the Sacramental life.

How few, even of our most devout communicants, appreciate or understand this! Persons who would not dream of allowing their children to go without Baptism have nevertheless wofully inadequate or distorted ideas of its purpose. "It is a pious and proper act, good for the child," they say; or, "At least it can do him no harm," meaning that by such performance they have dutifully obeyed God's command and therefore the child is sure of everlasting life. Baptism thus becomes a sort of external, mechanical, inevitable thing for purely selfish ends, and consequently of little moral value. All such ideas, however, are clearly contrary to the Church's own official pronouncement at every Baptism: "We receive this Child into the congregation of Christ's flock; and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ cruci-

fied, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." Here is the definite, clear-cut, and official statement of the Church to the effect that every Christian, by virtue of his very baptism, has in the most solemn manner before God undertaken "a definite liability for service". How rarely do parents realize that in Baptism they are enlisting their child in an army, enrolling him as a soldier, whose duty it is to fight for God and His Cause, and because it is going to be a hard and ceaseless struggle, altogether beyond his own strength, he will need to receive something of God, not for his own good but in order that he may be a good soldier of Jesus Christ! Suppose each child were baptized in this spirit and suppose parents universally followed up the child's baptism by teaching and training him for his life work as fighter, wholly committed to the Cause of his King, what a Church we should have in the next generation!

Likewise, the Holy Communion is too generally looked upon from either a selfish or magical standpoint. Even the inner circle who come to Communion regularly, devoutly and earnestly, with special petitions for a blessing on themselves, their loved ones, or their friends, come

for the most part feeling in the background of their consciousness that they are thus achieving their own salvation. "Preserve thy body and soul" they take very literally—and there is no harm in that—but they also take it in rather a mechanical, magic fashion as if by the mere act of receiving they were assured of salvation instead of looking for and receiving strength and power thereby to work out their own salvation by developing within themselves a Christ-like character, and also to work for the salvation of others.

In other words, Sacraments have become a sort of magic which commits God to certain acts mechanically and so relieves man of effort—a comfortable doctrine, truly, but scarcely adequate for Christians. Such a conception is not only magical but selfish. If the communicant's attitude is not merely a sort of "making up to God", an attempt to curry favor with Him for this world or the next, then it frequently exhausts itself in aspiration and desire for perfection of character which though a noble aspiration, as far as it goes, falls far short of the Christian ideal. It is selfishness still, though on a higher plane and little better on that account. Moreover such a viewpoint makes little appeal to the average man, who feels it scarcely worthy

of God that He should bestow certain great blessings on a few people who come repeatedly to Him in the Sacrament and perhaps overlook others who are doing worth while work in the world. If coming to the Communion is for the purpose of saving one's individual soul, then some of the best and noblest people in the world will pass it by and take their chance, continuing meanwhile their active and splendid service to their fellows.

The trouble with all of these ideas is not that they are wholly wrong. They are indeed partly true. But these partial truths have usurped the whole field, and obscured the real essential purpose of the Sacraments, which is not to minister to man's selfishness but rather to evoke his sacrifice. As Father Carey well says:

"The Sacraments are not charms to preserve us from the Evil One; they are modes devised by Christ, whereby He can give us His presence as we make our pilgrimage through the difficult roads of life, and as we try to build His Kingdom faithfully. . . . But to a fighting Christian the chief value of the Sacraments lies here; that, as we strive to build Christ's Kingdom of righteousness and love, we need above all things His Presence, so that, with Him beside us, we can build His Kingdom effectually. This is a

point not always sufficiently expressed. Christians are invited to Communion that their own personal holiness may be developed. But this can easily become a kind of religious selfishness; our business is not merely to be holy, but to glorify God by building Christ's Kingdom on earth. Too often we seem to teach 'Come and be holy' whereas we should say 'Become holy in order to help'. If we could grasp that a great work is to be done, a great campaign to be fought, a Kingdom to be built, then we should feel the need of Christ's Presence and aid, so that we might be strong enough to struggle and to work. It is so even with individual cases. Be holy in order to help your friend Dick is much more appealing to a boy than the simple 'Be holy'."

We must, therefore, endeavor to interpret the Sacraments not in terms of receiving but of giving, not in terms of individual welfare but of individual sacrifice. This stands out clearly at the institution of the Lord's Supper. No matter what other interpretations may be proper and legitimate, surely when our Lord takes into His hand the bread and, breaking it, says, "This is my body, do this," and when He takes the cup, the New Covenant in His blood, and gives a similar injunction, He is not merely enjoining

His followers to perform a certain rite or ceremony but, in the performance thereof, something vastly more vital. "Do this" must mean, among other things, "Do this very thing that I am doing; I am breaking my body and shedding my blood for the life of the world; go and do ye likewise. Spend and be spent to the uttermost in the service of mankind." Sacrificed life is being offered for sacrificing lives, and only as we come in the spirit of sacrifice are we able even dimly to discern the meaning and value of this wonderful Mystery. From the selfish and comfortable and indolent its significance is forever hidden. To approach the Sacrament in such spirit is either utter blindness or blasphemy.

Here too, then, we must change our point of view. We must bring to the forefront the conception of the Church as an army fighting to bring in the Kingdom of God. Each individual Christian is a soldier committed to active service in the Cause; and, inasmuch as it is a spiritual fight, he needs spiritual strength, which he is offered in the Holy Communion.

"To be a man," says Studdert Kennedy, "means to be a thinking creature, filled with the spirit of suffering and creative love which made him. The Sacrament is the means by which we become filled with that spirit. It is the heart,

the blood center of the great army of men who, having seen and loved God in Christ, are resolved to fight for and suffer with Him unto death and beyond it. It is the appointed means and method of meeting God. We are ready to have our bodies broken and our blood shed in the great Christian warfare against wrong, and we come for the refreshing of our spirits that we may not shrink. That bread is the ration of a fearless, fiercely fighting army. That wine is the stirrup cup of a band of knights who ride out to an endless war."

After all it is simply a point of view for which we are pleading, but a point of view that makes all the difference. The Sacraments viewed from this standpoint become very vital things. They cease to be mysteries for the elect only, or privileges for the good and devout, and become instead food and strength for all honest fighters for the Kingdom. They are no longer magic to be used by the superstitious and fearful; but natural, though divine, means of sustenance for the honest and the brave. Their use is no mark of goodness but an evidence of need, just as going to a physician is not evidence of health but of sickness and need of help. They are not merely medicine for sick souls, but also food for tired and hungry ones. They are not

simply privileges for the few but opportunities for the many. They are not a fancy decoration, but an essential part of every fighter's equipment, not "an extra" in religion but rather the regular thing for all. Without abating one whit the reverence with which they are, and should be, surrounded, they should become more common, simply because they are meant to meet our common needs. A realization of this will bring the Sacraments again into touch with life. All men need them, and, if rightly taught, all men would come in time to recognize their need and gladly use the means of satisfying it.

We have failed because we have timidly put forth the lower appeal and so have ceased to arouse any enthusiasm. We have frantically endeavored to fill our churches, and have succeeded in emptying them. We have been calling men to save their own souls instead of calling them to fight and thus inevitably driving them—if we present the matter rightly—to the Holy Communion for sustenance. We urge men to come to services for the good it will do them, instead of calling them to service for the good they can do others. And, as always, the selfish appeal has failed—and, worse still, has set the whole mind and activity of the Church in a wrong direction, until the Church of Christ has

ceased in these days to act in any real sense as an army of the Living God and has degenerated into a respectable and harmless self-preservation society.

If ever again we become a fighting Church, in which every member, those in the ranks as well as those in command, has an essential part to play, then men will inevitably be driven to God for help and the chief means of grace, the Sacraments, will be honored and used by all. Each congregation would then gather Sunday by Sunday as a band of faithful soldiers wearied and wounded and spent with the fray and seeking divine help for its continuance. Impressed with the seriousness of the conflict and aware of the tremendous odds against which they must struggle, they would assemble as tired toilers seeking refreshment and rest, as weak mortals seeking divine strength, as discouraged disciples seeking courage from above, as wounded soldiers seeking healing for their wounds, and as valiant fighters needing rations and ammunition for the fray. All of this and much more has our great Commander in store for all His faithful soldiers and servants, and the chief means by which He bestows these gifts are the Sacraments of His appointment.

Thus viewed, the Holy Communion be-

comes instinct with vitality. It touches our lives in very practical and real fashion. It lifts us up to the heights where we not only "think God's thoughts after Him" but, in vital union with Him, carry on His work—His sacrificial work for the world's redemption. For the great underlying essential meaning of this Divine Symbol is that God's body is forever broken, His blood forever shed in continuous sacrificial service and suffering, until that day comes when evil is no more, and the Kingdoms of this world have in reality become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. Thus the Sacrament becomes both a symbol and a means whereby man aligns and unites himself with God in His outpouring of Himself for the salvation of the world. The most God-like thing in all the world is sacrificial service, and this is the great underlying and essential meaning of the Sacrament of His death. In this lies the one hope of mankind.

Red with His blood, the better day is dawning;  
Pierced by His pain, the storm clouds roll apart;  
Rings o'er the earth the message of the morning,  
Still on the Cross the Saviour bares His heart.

Passionately fierce the voice of God is pleading,  
Pleading with men to arm them for the fight;  
See how those hands, majestically bleeding,  
Call us to rout the armies of the night.

Not to the work of sordid selfish saving  
Of our own souls to dwell with Him on high;  
But to the soldier's splendid selfless braving,  
Eager to fight for righteousness and die.

Peace does not mean the end of all our striving,  
Joy does not mean the drying of our tears;  
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving  
Up to the light where God Himself appears.

Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring  
Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,  
Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,  
Strength'ning their arms to warfare glad and grim.

Bread of Thy Body give me for my fighting,  
Give me to drink Thy sacred Blood for wine;  
While there are wrongs that need me for the right-  
ing,  
While there is warfare splendid and divine.

Give me for light the sunshine of Thy sorrow,  
Give me for shelter the shadow of Thy Cross,  
Give me to share the glory of Thy morrow,  
Gone from my heart is the bitterness of loss.

## V

### WORSHIP AND THE KINGDOM

JUST at present Worship among us is at a very low ebb, if indeed it has not become almost a lost art. Careful statistics show that fully two thirds of our members do not even take the trouble to attempt to worship with regularity. It has never occurred to them as an essential part of their Christian duty. Of those who do attend, how many come listlessly, joylessly, without enthusiasm, and with little or no appreciation of the nature of worship or what it is supposed to effect! Having no clear ideas on the matter they conceive the whole composite of activities—prayers, responses, sermon, Bible reading, anthem, Sacrament—as all on one dead level and all taken together to constitute “Worship”. Some indeed are out and out idolaters, worshipping the Sermon, the Choir, or the Preacher, instead of Almighty God. Others

come seeking only for benefit for themselves, be it intellectual, aesthetic, or spiritual. The idea of worship as such is totally absent from their minds. A good illustration of this was the comment some years ago of an intelligent Russian who, on being asked his impressions after attending St. Paul's Cathedral, London, replied that "Only the smallest part of the service consisted of worship and that did not appear to be the chief purpose for which the people had assembled." Likewise if the motives of the majority of our church attendants were scrutinized, probably not one in ten would reveal any remotest notion of coming to church really to worship.

This failure rightly to value or appreciate worship, is the cardinal sin and prevailing weakness of modern Protestantism. For, whatever may be the errors into which the Churches of Rome and the East have fallen, it must at least be admitted that they have retained the idea of worship much better than we. A traveller in Armenia writes that there was nothing which struck him so much as "the hardship and discomfort which the people generally were prepared to put up with, in order that they might join in the worship of God. The Armenian service on Sunday mornings usually begins at six

and lasts without a break from six to eleven. No seats are provided in the churches. Those who come either stand or kneel on the stone floor. The singing is of the very simplest character and there are no sermons, the service consisting entirely of praise, of prayer, and of the Holy Communion. And yet, inconvenient as the arrangement of the services appears, the traveller may see church after church filled with working men, standing shoulder to shoulder, for hours together, trying to join in spirit in a service which they can only partly understand, as the Turks have destroyed nearly all their books. The constant repetition of this sight, in different parts of their country, cannot but suggest a contrast with the one so common in our own land. How often do we see people coming into church, the uppermost thought in whose mind seems to be, if we can judge at all by their actions, how to secure their own comfort. They are to be seen lolling about in their pews in a way in which they would never think of behaving if they went to call on one of their friends and sat down in his sitting-room. How often do we see people who have no wish to be irreverent, but who have so little realized what worship means that they make no effort to join in the responses assigned to them in the service and do not even take the

trouble to kneel down upon their knees during the prayers, in order to show by this, the simplest and most obvious sign of all, their respect for God and His Worship."

The causes of this neglect are of course manifold. But it is not difficult to put one's finger on the chief one, which must be remedied before we can recover this lost art. It is to be found in the selfishness of human nature as reflected in the individualistic attitude of Protestantism. This is well illustrated by a series of articles, followed by innumerable letters, in one of our magazines some years ago on the subject, "Should Smith go to Church?" Those who thought Smith ought to go reasoned for the most part that it would do him good in one way or another. It would give him a new train of thought, take him out of the rut of ordinary every-day affairs, give him moral and spiritual and, sometimes, intellectual stimulus. Some frankly advocated going for the sake of the beautiful music and others for the stimulating sermon, while many doubtless thought, even if they did not say it, that by attending church Smith would be in the way of ultimately saving his soul. These and many other arguments like them were for the great majority the only ground of the Church's appeal—all of them

utterly and solely selfish. And if Smith failed to be moved, as doubtless was often the case, it would scarcely be to his discredit. Perhaps he was of too generous and unsuperstitious a nature to be reached by such motives.

A similar viewpoint is also set forth in Mr. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, in which he takes his stand two centuries in the future and in very graphic prophetic fashion depicts the world as it then is. As regards the Church of that time, he tells us that most church or parish buildings have disappeared, and in their stead are a few large auditoriums or preaching houses "run" by select preachers, who thus address huge audiences of a Sunday morning. The size of these audiences, in fact, is many times that of the building, since, for the convenience of those who do not care to take the trouble to come out to church, telephones have been installed, so that one may sit in an easy chair or loll in bed, for that matter, and with the receiver at one's ear acquire one's weekly inspiration!

At first blush many Christians will see little to criticise in this suggestion, but rather much to commend. It appeals to them as a sensible and practical arrangement, which only serves to show how far the average mind is perverted on the subject. The suggestion is only plausible and

difficult to combat, however, because so many of us tacitly accept its underlying false premise, which is that worship is chiefly, if not solely, for the individual's benefit. If the purpose of worship is to do man good then it is hard to see why one may not choose an auditorium or attend a concert or stay at home, according as he gets the most benefit. The trouble is not with the argument in either illustration but with the underlying assumption. And here we come upon the root difficulty—this individualistic and selfish attitude. Worship will never be revived among us until this fundamental conception is altered. The whole body is sick and no palliatives will suffice. No pleading or cajoling or threatenings or sensational claptrap devices will be of more than temporary value. The whole point of view must be changed and absolutely reversed. The modern Protestant heresy that "the chief object of worship is to do good to the individual", together with its twin brother, that "the individual may worship just as well at home", must be killed or worship itself will die.

Indeed, it is painfully evident that this selfish motive has already lost its force. The best type of men do not desire so much to be done good as to do good and they refuse to be forever concerned with their own welfare either temporal

or spiritual. This appeal therefore fails to elicit the response expected. Even Church members, obsessed with this idea, look upon church attendance as a sort of extra to be done if convenient; or if the weather is not too hot, or too cold; or if friends or relatives do not drop in. To the average Protestant mind, and to all too many Churchmen, worship has become an optional and occasional thing instead of a duty to be regularly and faithfully discharged; and, as a consequence, our services are sparsely attended, our organization is weak, our work is neglected, and our God dishonored.

What then is to be done? Can we bring to bear a motive or motives that will appeal to the modern man? I believe we can by setting forth Worship in relation to the Kingdom of God. For some this may not seem to be the highest ground; but, after all, there are very few who can give themselves to pure worship and adoration of God in His essential Perfection and Glory. Moreover, it may be possible to arrive at this summit by another and easier road. At any rate it is worth the effort to discover a motive that shall revive and vitalize worship for the average man. Let us then for the time being consider the Church simply as an instrument to achieve certain ends, a body of men setting out on a

Great Adventure. The members of such a body will be very little concerned about their personal fortunes or individual welfare but very much concerned about the success of their cause, the welfare of the body, and the honor of their leader. And here we have three very human, natural, appealing, and powerful motives, all of which may find ample scope in the Church of Christ.

For, divine though its origin be, the Church, after all, is a human organization. Christianity is not, as Guizot is reported to have said, simply "An idea thrown into the world to be developed". On the contrary, when the Master came to found the Kingdom of God on earth he built upon the fact that "man is a social animal", and started a society to carry on and perpetuate His work. And while doubtless the Church of to-day is somewhat different in organization, as in spirit, from that simple fellowship with which it started, nevertheless in essence it is the same, in that it seeks, by binding men together, to achieve results otherwise impossible.

What, indeed, that is worth while in life, can be achieved in isolation? Is business success one's aim? Then it is manifest that this can be attained only through some kind of association with one's fellows. Is pleasure one's object?

Then it is a mere truism to assert that man must associate with others, as witness the theatre, the club, the social gathering. Is learning one's goal? Then must the average man, at least, hie him to a school or college or library where in company with his fellows he may levy upon the common stock of the knowledge of the race. Or is some great cause at stake, some wrong to be righted, some important project to be undertaken? Here again, only by coöperation of man with his brother man can the object be accomplished. Jesus Christ came to give the world a Cause, the greatest cause the world has ever known and one faced with the greatest difficulties. Of all causes, this surely can only succeed in so far as men combine and coöperate with all their energies for the common end.

The Church is just such an organization of men, banded together for the sole purpose of bringing in the Kingdom of God. It is, we are fond of saying, an army; and the appellation is very suggestive. An army has its drills, its inspection, its parades, at which times the members perform certain acts, not in isolation but together; not as individuals but as members of a body. Much that is done seems to the outsider—and frequently to the enlisted man before he has been in action—wearisome and unnecessary,

not to say trivial and foolish. But the experienced soldier knows that all of these things are invaluable, and that on the faithfulness and thoroughness with which they are done depends in large measure the army's fighting ability. The acts themselves may be trivial, but not so the doing of them together. That is the vital and important thing. For the doing of even trifling things together increases the ability of the various members to act together, as one body, in everything, thus multiplying the efficiency of the individual a thousand fold. It is by such means that a mob is transformed into an army, a hapless horde of individuals into an efficient fighting machine. As Kipling well says,

"It ain't the guns nor armament, nor fund that they  
can pay,  
But the close coöperation that makes 'em win the  
day;  
It ain't the individual, nor the army as a whole,  
But the everlastin' team work of every bloomin'  
soul."

This "everlastin' team work" is one of the greatest needs of the Church to-day. To the lamentable lack of it is due our pitiable inefficiency. And, on the contrary, if in any large measure it can be attained, the Church will once again regain its leadership and influence in the world.

Toward this attainment public worship has no small contribution to make, since it accustoms men to think and act as well as pray together for a common end. The formal enrollment of members, the exhortations of leaders, the regular gatherings of people—even the minutiae of worship—all play an important part. Viewed as ends in themselves—like the discipline of the army—these things may to some seem scarcely worth while, but, viewed as means of increasing the fighting ability of the Church Militant, they assume tremendous value and importance. Here, then, we have a common-sense motive that should appeal to the man on the street. Worship thus has a real, practical value not merely for the individual soul but as a means of achieving the Church's great end—the bringing in of the Kingdom of God. For the sake of that Kingdom, then, we may bid men to worship.

But the Church is not merely an army. It is also a Fellowship, and a fellowship not of saints or of the elect, but of sinners who are trying to be better and to do better, of men and women who have caught the gleam of better things and have banded together in the first place to help one another in true brotherly fashion, and then to help each other to live up to the high ideals of the organization—to serve

mankind in all possible ways. This fellowship, like the lodge or the trades union, has its stated meetings at which plans are initiated, methods adopted, and inspiration given and received. The very life of the Fellowship is dependent on these meetings, and the test of a loyal and faithful member is the regularity with which he attends. Without the meetings the Fellowship would be a fellowship only in name, a mere paper organization, and would soon cease to be. But when hand touches hand, and voice mingles with voice, then heart begins to beat with heart and a sense of brotherhood is felt such as binds the members in indissoluble bonds. Brotherhood cannot be attained by merely talking or thinking or wishing or even praying about it. To attain it men must live as brothers by doing brotherly deeds and entering into brotherly relations with one another.

This sense of Brotherhood was an outstanding characteristic of the early Church, and its absence is due chiefly to the fact that the religion of the average Christian has become selfish and individualistic, to the great detriment of the Cause.

"If the Church," says Father Carey, "were manifestly a Brotherhood in Christ, whose unselfish object were to redeem human life, it

would not lack supporters and friends. But is it? Is the ordinary congregation manifestly a body pledged to redeem human life by the power of God? In its best elements, yes. But how often merely a collection of camp followers who languidly attend services and in action do nothing. Little jarring sets, criticism of anything unconventional, a pulling to pieces of others, a stiff and cold respectability and conventionality, a resentment of any encroachment on petty but fiercely defended privileges, an unwillingness to welcome newcomers because they take up the room or lessen the spacious ease of the old tenants—such are far more common than burning zeal and self-forgetting labor to build the Kingdom. If we were really on fire to build we should have no time for pettiness, our churches would no longer be ‘consecrated ice houses’, which suffer from no rebuke except when growing life makes some mistake of zeal.”

If these conditions are to be corrected, the Church must by some means recover this sense of brotherhood; and absolutely indispensable to this end is the meeting together of the brethren.

For the sake of the brotherhood, then, for the strengthening of the fellowship, we must bid man come to church. Bid him realize that he has a duty to the brethren, to meet with them,

to lend his voice in the singing, his heart and soul in the prayers, and to give as well as receive encouragement and strength from the society of his fellows. Let him feel that he will be missed, by God of course—though that argument does not always appeal as perhaps it ought—but also by his fellows; that the success of the gathering and the success of the following week's efforts of his brothers is in a measure dependent on his presence; and you will come very near moving the average right hearted man. Let him see "some use in it" and that he can do some good beyond merely saying his prayers and listening to a sermon, and the man on the street will come in.

But he will not stay in, or come again, unless he is made to feel a real sense of comradeship, a true warmth of fellowship within. He will go instead to the lodge or club or a ball game, where he finds the brotherliness he seeks. This human note, this note of fellowship, must be stressed and made more evident in our churches. It will mean of course the abolition of rented pews in the house of God, and also the "fixed seat" idea of the "regular parishioners" which carries over all the snobbery, selfishness, and unbrotherliness of the other system. It will mean delicate attentions to strangers and considerate thoughtfulness

of all by each, so that the entire atmosphere shall be purged of every drop of selfishness and the worship in this sense become entirely other regarding, and so truly Christian. Nor does this stress on the human mean any slighting of the divine—quite the contrary. Mystery, beauty, dignity, ritual, are all compatible with fellowship. Indeed, they need fellowship to save them from being mere forms and make them realities; and, on the other hand, fellowship needs them to consecrate and make permanent its ideals by bringing them into contact with the divine. Man's duty to the Fellowship, then, demands his presence at the weekly worship. No man is a good member of the body, a good Christian, who fails to meet together regularly with his fellows.

There is still another motive which exercises a powerful influence upon the enlisted man; for the good soldier is not only consecrated to a Cause and devoted to his fellows but also loyal to his beloved Captain. This motive has its counterpart in the Christian Church. Worship is one way in which men may publicly show honor to Almighty God, one way in which they can confess Him before men. The man who goes regularly to public worship, despite all temptations to do otherwise, is preaching a silent

sermon which is more effective than many heard from the pulpit. Such an one gives convincing evidence that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He is willing to stand up and be counted as on the Lord's side, and in so doing he strengthens his own faith, encourages his fellows, and honors his God. Too many Christians are content to be like the man whose boy once said: "When I grow up I want to be a Christian like father, because nobody would know whether he is a Christian or not." An apt illustration of such persons was the clock in a certain church which, being minus both dial plate and hands, though otherwise complete, and being wound regularly by the sexton, continued to tick year in and year out but because it kept the time to itself no one was any the better for its existence. Too many desire to be Christians in secret, while others resort to the most miserable subterfuges to hide their indolence or timidity. A terse and apposite rejoinder to such persons was made by Theodore Roosevelt in reply to a man who gave the usual threadbare excuse for a Sunday's outing, that "he could worship God as well in the fields as in the church". "Yes," snapped Mr. Roosevelt, "but no one will ever suspect you of it."

There is the whole thing in a nutshell.

Merely to be good in private—if such a thing were possible—does not measure up to the Christian standard. We must add to such goodness public testimony, evidence before man of our discipleship and loyalty to God, and one important way of doing this is by regular Public Worship. Such worship, in modern parlance, has an advertising value: It proclaims to all men that one believes in God and is committed to His Cause. But its advertising value is in proportion to its regularity. To go only when convenient or when the spirit moves one is doing God slight honor and His cause little service. Nothing short of absolutely regular and constant participation in Public Worship will fulfil the duty of a Christian. Nothing short of that will render appropriate honor to God in the sight of men. The following interesting anecdote from *Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate* will serve to illustrate this point:

“The Emperor Napoleon said one day to Dr. Theodore Evans (warden of the American Church in Paris), ‘Next Sunday there will be a fête at the palace, and we shall expect you to be present.’

“Dr. Evans replied: ‘Sire, on that day I serve another King.’

“‘But,’ said the Emperor, ‘suppose I send for you to do some work for me?’

“‘Sire,’ was the answer, ‘if it is to relieve pain, I shall go, but if it is to do work which can be done as well another day, I cannot go. If not loyal to my God, I shall not be loyal to my sovereign.’”

“Napoleon responded, ‘Monsieur Evans, I respect America more than ever before.’”

Would not the modern world respect the Church more than ever before if all Christians were as conscientious in the matter of Public Worship?

It is not too much to say that the very existence of Christianity is dependent on Public Worship. Were all Christians simply Christians in secret, were Public Worship to cease, then would our church buildings soon disappear, and within a generation Christianity would become extinct. On the other hand, if every Christian worshipped with the regularity of the few, is it not sufficiently evident that the Cause of Christ would be immensely strengthened? Our Protestant brethren, realizing this, have once a year a “Go to Church Sunday”, which day is a veritable inspiration by sheer force of numbers in attendance. For the true disciple, every Sunday is “Go to Church Sunday” and

when all Christians come to realize this the Church will go forward with leaps and bounds.

Public Worship is a duty, not a thing to be done at one's pleasure or convenience. To neglect such duty is to sin quite as truly as to break any other of God's commands, and for aught we know it may result in more dire consequences than many another sin from which every decent man would shrink. Neglect of Public Worship is a sin against the Cause, a sin against the Brotherhood, and a sin against God. It retards the progress of the Kingdom, weakens the hands of the brethren, and dishonors the King. There surely is great need of an awakening of the conscience of Christians on this matter. Here then we have three motives for worship which, while confessedly not the only ones, are nevertheless of compelling force. They are practical, pragmatic, common sense. They appeal not to man's selfishness but to his heroism, not to his desire for salvation but to his instinct for service. Taken together, they form a three-fold cord which should draw every earnest disciple more regularly to the House of God.

Their attractive influence, however, is dependent upon the extent to which the individual Christian realizes the main purpose of the Church as an instrument for bringing in the

Kingdom of God and the extent to which he is fighting and striving for that end. Just as, in times of peace, regiments and companies are often torn with bitter dissension over trivial matters and attendance at drill becomes something of a dreary duty, while in war time those same men are drawn together with a closeness and intimacy such as is scarcely equalled anywhere in the world and attendance at drill or assembly becomes instinct with life and purpose, so it is in the Church. In the early days when the conflict was bitter, and the objective very real, the disciples, despite great difficulties and often at risk of their lives, met together regularly for weekly and sometimes daily worship. The welfare of the Cause, the needs of the brethren, and the honor of their Lord impelled them, and as a result their worship was intense, real, and absolutely essential. They simply could not get along without it.

So to-day; the reality and attractiveness of our worship depends on the extent to which we are fighting. The person who takes his religion as a conventional thing that adds a sort of respectable veneer to life, or the one who regards it merely as a means of saving his own soul, knows nothing of the need or nature of true worship; while the one who is carrying on a

real fight, whether it be with sin in his own soul or the evil entrenched in the community about him or in the world at large, knows from experience his need of comradeship both human and divine, and so appreciates and uses to the full the privileges of worship.

Ideally, Public Worship is the assembly of a band of fighters, coming into the presence of their Captain for His approval of what they have done during the past week and His orders for the week to come. So spent are they with the fray that they cannot stay away but must needs come for new strength and encouragement, partly from one another but chiefly from Him. Thus their prayers become the earnest pleadings of faltering though at heart faithful servants who ask pardon for the past and guidance and strength for the days to come. Their recitation of the Creed becomes a renewed and passionate vow of allegiance offered in the spirit of the Knight Templar as with raised sword hilt, making the sign of the cross, he gave utterance to his faith, for which he was willing to fight to the death. How glorious that Creed must have sounded! Their singing of hymns is not the usual timid and listless murmurings of lulling lullabies for self-centered souls, but glad and joyous and terrible war songs that inspire singers

and hearers alike with the determination to do and to die if necessary for the Cause. Such worshippers have no thought of self but only of their Master and His Cause, and so their Worship becomes a great outpouring of heart and soul and mind such as uplifts and inspires. Warmth there is and enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, which are contagious, and worship is seen and realized to be not an extra for the elect, which the majority may do without, not a selfish and self-centered exercise, but an absolutely essential part of the equipment of all who would prove good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Thus at the end we come back to the beginning. We must recover the spirit of adventure by keeping clearly before us the Church's main objective—the ushering in of the Kingdom of God. To attain this end man must align himself with God and depend upon Him for guidance and support. He must also work in closest coöperation with his fellows. Ultimately we rise or fall, win or lose, together. Not as individuals but as a body, as a race, man with man, and men with God, all together, must we march onward to the City of God. Christ, our beloved Captain, leads and calls on us to follow. “The Son of God goes forth to war, *Who follows in His train?*”

At a gathering of Civil War veterans an old officer was speaking. As he went on to recount the scenes and struggles of former days he became very intense and very graphic. One could almost see the opposing armies lined up and hear the rattle of the musketry, the roar of the cannon, the clash of the sabers, the shouts of the charge, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying. As the speaker proceeded the veterans listened with rapt attention and moistened eyes, and at the very climax of his oration an old man, with tears streaming down his cheeks and voice quivering with emotion, leaped to his feet and shouted: "Yes, Captain, I was there with you too!" When at the last Great Day the Captain of the Christian army, the Church Militant, stretches forth His pierced Hands and recounts the struggles, the trials, the conflicts, the successes and failures, the wounds and suffering, of His faithful soldiers, and the final triumph of His Cause, may it be our blessed privilege, yours and mine, to stand before that assembled throng and say, with all humility yet with sincerity and truth: "Yes, Captain, I was there with you too!"









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taken from the Building**

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